said that the Government of Pakistan was fully cognizant of the situation and looked after the welfare of all its citizens, particularly, the minority community.

Security of Sikhs in Pakistan

†2154. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Taliban terrorist in Pakistan have forced the Sikhs out by occupying their homes;

(b) if so, the details of wrongs being faced by Sikhs in Pakistan and current situation of Sikhs there;

(c) whether Central Government has approached Government of Pakistan for security of Sikhs; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) and (b) There have been reports about Sikh families being driven out of their homes and being subjected to Jaziya and other such impositions.

(c) and (d) On seeing such reports, the Government of India had taken up the matter with the Government of Pakistan. The Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson commented in response that Sikhs living in Pakistan were Pakistani citizens and hence of no concern to India. He also said that the Government of Pakistan was fully cognizant of the situation and looked after the welfare of all its citizens, particularly, the minority community.

960 MW project of Pakistan on Kishenganga River

2155. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact Pakistan is contemplating to build a 960 MW project to dam the Kishenganga River on the other side of the Line of Control;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this would impact our Kishenganga Hydropower Project; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VINCENT PALA): (a) and (b) Pakistan has awarded a 969 MW project called Neelum-Jhelum Hydroelectric Project (near Mazzafarabad) with a dam at Nauseri on River Neelum (Kishenganga) on the other side of the Line of Control, to a Chinese Consortium for implementation.

(c) and (d) Kishenganga Hydroelectric Project is upstream of the proposed Neelum Jhelum Hydroelectric Project. Pakistan has objected to the construction of the Kishenganga

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Hydroelectric Project *inter-alia* alleging that the power generation at the proposed Neelum Jhelum Hydroelectric Project would be adversely affected. India has conveyed to Pakistan that in terms of the relevant provisions of the Indus Water Treaty, there is no existing hydroelectric use by Pakistan on the river Kisjenganga and that India's Kishenganga HE Project is fully in accordance with the Treaty.

New route for Mansarovar Yatra

2156. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering opening of a new route for Mansarovar Yatra *via* Himachal Pradesh passing through Shipkila pass on Tibet border;

(b) whether the Ministry has received a representation from Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh to this effect;

(c) if so, the action Government has taken, or plans to take on it; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) to (d) Government has received a representation from Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh for opening of a new route for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra passing through Shipki La Pass. During the visit of President Hu Jintao of China to India from November 20 to 23, 2006, the two sides agreed to explore the possibility of opening an additional route. We have proposed additional routes to the Chinese side for their consideration.

Participation in disarmament talks

2157. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minister has recently assured Japan of Government's "constructive" participation in nuclear disarmament talks;

(b) if so, the details regarding it thereof;

(c) whether the country has sought Japan's co-operation in the civil nuclear sector; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) to (d) During his visit to Japan in 3rd-4th July, 2009 for the third round of India-Japan Strategic Dialogue, External Affairs Minister held discussions with his Japanese counterpart on various issues, including nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and civil nuclear cooperation. In his remarks, EAM said that India has consistently supported the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Japanese side said that Japan is aware of future opportunities in civil nuclear energy which could be considered after taking into account various factors.